Some Important Themes in Current Heidegger Research

Any essay which tries to provide a survey of the numerous avenues of research now being pursued into the problems raised by the thought of Martin Heidegger is rather presumptuous, especially if it makes any claims to being exhaustive. Thus let me say immediately that the following analysis will suffer necessarily from omissions and probably from overemphasis of certain themes which I find to be of importance in Heidegger's thinking. Nevertheless, I believe that the areas discussed in the essay are generally acknowledged to be important for understanding this formidable thinker. The essay will also consider briefly how Heidegger's thinking is important for coming to terms with critical problems of modern existence; I have in mind here the question about technology. The essay will be divided into the following sections: 1) Heidegger's Gesamtausgabe; 2) the problem of the relation between Husserlian and Heideggerean phenomenology; 3) the question of the temporality of Dasein and the time of Being; 4) Heidegger on politics and technology; 5) other issues.

1. Heidegger's Gesamtausgabe. Certainly the on-going publication of Heidegger's enormous Gesamtausgabe ("collected works") is a very important event for Heidegger scholarship. Projected to include at least 57 volumes, the Gesamtausgabe is divided into four major areas: 1) published works, from 1914-1970; 2) the Marburg lectures from 1923-1928 and the Freiburg lectures from 1928-1944; 3) unpublished writings from 1919-1967; 4) "sketches and notes" (Aufzeichnungen und Hinweise), which are related to already published material. The publisher's flier includes the order of publication planned for the first
three years, but it is unclear that this arrangement is actually being followed. For example, an edition of *Sein und Zeit* which includes Heidegger's own marginalia was published in Spring 1977 but was not included in the brochure's projection for this year. Two volumes have already been published, *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*¹, Marburg lectures from the summer semester of 1927 (just after the publication of *Sein und Zeit*), and *Logik: Die Frage nach der Wahrheit*², Marburg lectures from the winter semester 1925-26.

If the first two volumes are typical of those to follow, Heidegger scholars are in for several years of fascinating reading. As Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, one of the editors of the *Gesamtausgabe*, pointed out to me in the summer of 1976, Heidegger looked upon his lectures as a kind of "proving ground" for his published works. In the lectures he would try out various approaches to fundamental issues, and often in a way which was more accessible and lively than that of his published works. These lectures reveal, for example, Heidegger's personal attitude toward his own teachers and associates, including Rickert, Natorp, Scheler, and Husserl. And there are also instances of what, for Heidegger, must be understood as humorous remarks. In *Die Grundprobleme*, for example, Heidegger says that although some have called him a "Catholic phenomenologist," this makes about as much sense as the notion of "Protestant mathematics."³ The lectures also show Heidegger to be an acerbic critic of what he considers to be philosophical foolishness, and political misuse of philosophy. In this regard, we find in *Die Grundprobleme's* introduction an extensive discussion of the concept of the "Weltanschauung", a discussion which explains how some "vulgar" thinkers (including politically-minded ones) spout out nonsense from every streetcorner in the attempt to reduce all fundamental thinking to some sort of life-guiding interpretation of "reality and history." These lectures will also provide fertile grounds for those concerned with tracing the "development" of Heidegger's thinking, since he himself published his writings only sporadically and often only long after they were originally written.

³Heidegger, *Die Grundprobleme*, p. 28.